REMARKS

Initially, Applicant notes that the remarks and amendments made by this paper are consistent with the proposals discussed with the Examiner during the telephone call of April 24, 2007.

The Office Action mailed February 12, 2007 considered and rejected claims 24-32 and 34-35.[1] Claims 24, 25, 27-32, 34, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Barnett (U.S. Patent 6,772,157) hereinafter Barnett.[2] Additionally, claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barnett in view of Anglin (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0199521).

Claim 34 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 for purportedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicant respectfully disagrees. In particular, Applicant respectfully submits that the computer program product recited in claim 34 was and is directed to statutory subject matter, inasmuch as it comprises computer-readable media. Even though the computer-readable media could have been interpreted as corresponding to carrier-signals, Applicant respectfully submits that carrier signals are physical (enabling them to be transmitted and read) and are, therefore, statutorily eligible for patent protection. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Applicant has nonetheless amended claim 34 to expedite the prosecution of this case by narrowing the scope of the recited claim to computer-readable storage media that store computer-executable instructions for implementing the methods of the invention.[3] In view of these amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that the §101 rejections directed at non statutory subject matter are now moot for claim 34.

By this response, claims 24, 26, 29-32 and 34 have also been amended and claims 1-23, 33 and 35 have been cancelled, such that claims 24-32 and 34 now remain pending and of which claims 24 and 34 are the only independent claims at issue. Support for the amendments is found throughout the Specification, including, but not limited to, the disclosure found in ¶¶ [0033]-[0037].

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[1] Claims 1-23 & 33 were previously withdrawn and have now been cancelled.

[2] Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

[3] It will be appreciated, however, notwithstanding the amendments to the claims, that the Applicants reserve the right to pursue the scope of the claims and as presented prior to their amendments at any appropriate time in the future, should it arise, such as in a continuation application.

As recited in the claims, the present invention is generally directed to embodiments for delegating administrative rights in a zone based security administration. Claim 24, for example, recites a method of delegating administrative rights to other principals for items included in a main non-overlapping zone in a computer system that includes items stored in at least one volume, the volume being divided into at least one non-overlapping zone, each item residing in a non-overlapping zone from among the at least one non-overlapping zone, each non-overlapping zone having one or more principals with administrative rights.

The claimed method includes the acts of identifying the first items in the main non-overlapping zone, splitting the main non-overlapping zone into a first non-overlapping zone and a remaining non-overlapping main zone such that the zones do not overlap with any other zones included in the volume, the one or more main principals retaining administrative rights for the first non-overlapping zone and the remaining main non-overlapping zone, the first non-overlapping zone including the first items and the remaining main non-overlapping zone including that portion of items in the main non-overlapping zone not included in the first items, and an act of specifying that one or more first principals also have administrative rights to the first items.

Now, with regard to the substantive rejections based on the cited art, it will be noted that all of the pending independent claims were rejected as being anticipated by Barnett. Barnett discloses a delegated administration tool for administrating information in a database directory. In Barnett, an administrator with delegation authority over a domain (*zone*) can further delegate authority. The administrator may create a subset of users (*items*) known as a sub-domain (*first zone*) and assign an administrator over that sub-domain, and in such a way that the subset or sub-domain is still included within or overlaps with the main domain and possibly with other sub-domains, and based on the assignment of administrators, for example.

The foregoing embodiment disclosed in Barnett is clearly distinguished from the claimed embodiments that are recited in the currently pending claims for at least the reason presented in this response, as well as for the reasons mentioned over the phone. Among other things, the cited art clearly fails to disclose or suggest any embodiment that includes an act of splitting the main non-overlapping zone into a first non-overlapping zone and a remaining non-overlapping main zone such that the zones do not overlap with any other zones included in the volume, and as recited in combination with the other recited claim elements.

The cited art of Barnett discloses creating subsets of users, user attributes, and attribute values, but does not limit these subsets to zones that do not overlap as is required in the presently presented set of claims. According to the claimed invention, each time a new zone is created, such as by splitting an old zone, the split is done is such a way that there is never any overlapping of zones. The cited art merely identifies a subset and assigns an administrator to the subset. According to Barnett, it would be possible for a user to belong to multiple sub-domains, something that the present invention explicitly restricts because multiple sub-domains would result in overlapping zones. Because the cited art allows for a user to belong to multiple sub-domains, it does not teach all of the limitations presented in claim 24, including the limitation that requires splitting of zones with the restriction that splitting must occur in such a way as to prevent zones from overlapping.

The only other referenced art, Anglin, which was only cited in the rejection of dependent claims fails to compensate for the inadequacies of Barnett. In particular, Anglin also fails to teach or suggest any embodiment that would include splitting of zones subject to the restriction that the splitting must be done in such a way as to prevent zones from overlapping, as claimed, for example, in combination with the other recited claim elements.

The remaining independent claim, claim 34, recites a computer program product that implements the method of claim 24. Because claim 24 incorporates the limitations of independent claim 1, the reasoning used to distinguish claim 1 is also applicable to claim 24.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the other rejections to the claims are now moot and do not, therefore, need to be addressed individually at this time. It will be appreciated, however, that this should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action regarding the cited art or the pending application, including any official notice. Instead, Applicant reserves the right to challenge any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action at any appropriate time in the future, should the need arise. Furthermore, to the extent that the Examiner has relied on any Official Notice, explicitly or implicitly, Applicant specifically requests that the Examiner provide references supporting the teachings officially noticed, as well as the required motivation or suggestion to combine the relied upon notice with the other art of record.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 11th day of May, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

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